

### **Statement on the Crash of an Air Force C-21 in Alabama**

*April 18, 1995*

Hillary and I were very saddened to learn of the crash of an Air Force C-21 aircraft near Alexander City, Alabama, last night, with the loss of eight lives. The death of these individuals is a tragic loss for the U.S. Air Force and the Nation. Their death reminds us all how much we are indebted to those military and civilian personnel who serve in the defense of our Nation. Our hearts and our prayers go out to the families and friends of those who were killed.

### **The President's News Conference**

*April 18, 1995*

**The President.** Good evening. Ladies and gentlemen, before we begin the press conference, I want to express on behalf of Hillary and myself our profoundest condolences to the families and to the loved ones of the eight Americans who were killed in the crash of the Air Force plane in Alabama last night.

Tonight I want to talk about welfare reform. But before I do, I'd like to take just a minute to put welfare reform into the context of what is going on now in the United States Congress. Before the Easter break, the House of Representatives produced a flurry of ideas and proposals. Some of them were good. Some need work. Some should be rejected. My job is to work with people of good faith in both parties, in both Houses, to do what is best for America.

I was not elected to produce a pile of vetoes. And the Congress was not elected to produce a pile of political issues for the next election. My philosophy is that we have to go beyond this kind of politics-as-usual, the old debate about whether there should be more Government or less Government. I think we need a better and different Government that helps people who are helping themselves, one that offers opportunity but demands responsibility.

I have some common goals with the new Republican majority in the Congress. They say they want to reduce the deficit and the size of Government. I support that. My ad-

ministration has reduced the deficit by \$600 billion and is reducing the size of Government by over 250,000 people. In fact, if it were not for the interest we have to pay on the debt run up between 1981 and 1992, our Government's budget would be in balance today. Let me say that again, because I don't think the American people know that. If it were not for the interest we have to pay this year on the debt run up between 1981 and 1992, our Government's budget would be in balance today.

The Republicans say that they want to be tough on crime. Our crime bill is tough on crime, and I want to work with them to build on that. The Republicans are supporting the line-item veto, and so am I. I worked hard to get a version of the line-item veto passed through the Senate, and I look forward to working with them, actually getting agreement in both Houses and having a line-item veto come into law.

As we look ahead, the issue is, what are we going to do on the outstanding matters? I have commented at length on them before the newspaper editors, but let me say again, I want us to show responsibility and common sense and decency. Do we need to cut regulation, as they say? Of course, we do. But we don't need to undermine our commitment to the safety of our skies or the purity of our water and air or the sanctity of our long-term commitment to the environment. Do we need to be tough on crime? Of course, we do, but we don't need to repeal the commitment to 100,000 police officers or the assault weapons ban. Do we need to cut taxes? I believe we do, but not as much as the House bill provides. I think the tax cuts should be targeted to the middle class and to education so we raise incomes and growth for America over the long run.

Now let's talk a little about welfare. That's an issue that the Republicans and I, and the congressional Democrats should be able to agree on. They say we should end welfare as we know it. That's a commitment I made in 1992 and again in 1993 and 1994. Welfare reform is surely an example where all the people ought to be able to get together in the Congress to have reform.

We all know what we need. We need time limits for welfare recipients. We need strict

work requirements. We need very tough child support enforcement. We need more flexibility for the States. That's what our administration has been working on for more than 2 years now. We already have freed 25 States from cumbersome Federal rules and regulations so they can pursue welfare reform on their own. Tonight we're cutting redtape for two more States, for Montana and Missouri, one State with a Republican Governor, one State with a Democratic Governor, both committed to require people on welfare to go to work within 2 years. That's the same time limit I called for when I ran for President and that I called for last year.

Most people are in agreement on this. The question is, what are we going to do about it in Washington. In 1994, I introduced the most sweeping welfare reform ever presented to Congress. In 1994, Senator Dole, Senator Gramm, Senator Brown, and Senator Packwood cosponsored a pretty good bill. In 1994, Speaker, then-Congressman, Gingrich and 162 of the 175 House Republicans sponsored a bill that was an awful lot like mine. All of these bills were based on the same idea: The fundamental goal of welfare reform is to move people into the work force and to make them independent.

But the bill that passed the House of Representatives, supported by the House Republicans, in my opinion, is too weak on work and too tough on children. It saves a lot of money in the short run but at great damage to our long run interests, promoting responsible parenting and working to promote independence.

The only way to save money over the long run is to move people from welfare to work and to ensure that they have the skills to keep jobs and to stay independent. And it's wrong to cut children off just because their mothers are minor. After all, a child is a child, a baby is a baby. Whether they're white or black or brown, whether they're born in or out of wedlock, every child deserves a chance to make a good life.

Surely we should not punish children for the mistakes of their parents. Instead, we ought to give them a chance to become independent, full participating citizens, not part of the welfare population.

Let me say again, this does not have to be a partisan issue. I know that there are some here in Washington, for example, who want to fold this whole welfare reform issue into the broader budget debate. If you put it into the budget process, as those of you who live here know, it can be buried in a pile of other issues. And then there will be no need for a bipartisan consensus on welfare reform. But welfare reform is too important for that kind of Washington game. It should be open. It should be bipartisan. And we should get on with it right away.

I want to challenge Congress to pass a bipartisan welfare reform bill and put it on my desk by July the 4th, so that we can celebrate Independence Day by giving Americans on welfare the chance, the opportunity, the responsibility, to move to independence.

### ***Surgeon General Nomination***

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

**Q.** Mr. President, Senator Dole has threatened to block Dr. Foster's nomination as Surgeon General from reaching a vote or going to the Senate floor. I have a two-part question. Are you going to the mat to fight for it? Are you going to withdraw it? And do you think that abortion, which is still lawful in this country, will be a litmus test in Presidential politics?

**The President.** Yes, I'm going to the mat for the nomination. Whether abortion is a litmus test in Presidential politics is up to the voters. Dr. Foster is a good man with a good record as a family doctor, as someone who has helped thousands of mothers to give birth to their children, and as an academic and as someone who has supported policies that are pro-family and pro-child. He is qualified. He should be confirmed. He should not be caught up in any kind of politics, Presidential or otherwise.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

### ***Russian Nuclear Cooperation With Iran***

**Q.** Mr. President, two countries with which the United States has important relationships, Russia and China, want to sell nuclear technology to Iran over your objections. Can you explain why Russia, in particular, would want to give this technology to a neigh-

boring country that intelligence agencies say is determined to acquire nuclear weapons? And do you think that when you go to Moscow that you will be able to persuade Mr. Yeltsin to cancel the sale?

**The President.** Well, as you know, I cannot explain why Russia would do it since I don't believe that it's in their interest to do it. I don't think it's right, and I don't think it's in their interest. If you ask them, I think they would say that they had a prior contractual obligation to do it, and they believe that the level of nuclear technology in the powerplants is so low that it won't lead to the development of a nuclear weapon. I believe that's what they would say. I think that's what the Chinese would say. But I disagree with them, and we're continuing to work with them.

The United States and our people have benefited greatly from this new engagement we've had with Russia and for our attempts to promote the nonproliferation agenda. There are nuclear weapons, large numbers of them now, being destroyed in Russia, weapons from Russia and the states of the former Soviet Union that had them before. And we are destroying weapons. For the first time, there are no Russian nuclear missiles pointed at the United States. So we are moving ahead in our nonproliferation agenda. I do not believe it's in their interest to do this. I understand what they say, but I disagree with them. And I hope I'll be able to prevail. I intend to continue to be quite aggressive on it.

Yes, Rita [Rita Braver, CBS News].

### ***"The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam"***

**Q.** Mr. President, you've been quoted as saying that you believe that Robert McNamara's new book, in which he essentially says that the U.S. had no underlying basis for the war in Vietnam, vindicates your own opposition to the war. I wonder if we could hear you talk about that. And also, if in this time of reflection, you feel vindicated about your handling of your own draft status?

**The President.** On the second matter, I've said all I have to say about it.

On the first, I believed our policy was incorrect. I think the book supports that conclusion. But I do not believe that the book should be used as yet another opportunity

to divide the United States over that. We should learn about what happened, resolve not to repeat our mistakes, honor the service of Americans, and go forward together. That's what we should be doing.

### ***Trade With Japan***

**Q.** The Japanese are threatening to pull out of auto talks unless U.S. negotiators stop threatening sanctions. Are you willing to do that? Are we at risk of a trade war?

**The President.** Well, we should not be at risk of a trade war, but I would remind you that we have been very patient as a country for a very long time in this area. And our major trade deficit in the world, except for our oil imports, has been with Japan and, of course, now with China and other countries in Asia combined. But Japan is a country that is a wealthy country, almost as wealthy as we are when you compare purchasing power parity, where consumer prices within the country of Japan are much, much higher than they are in the United States and could be maintained at that high level only by a sophisticated system of direct and indirect protectionism, which is most manifest in this area. We have strong differences. We have worked hard to resolve our trade differences with Japan. We have made some significant progress in other areas. And I'm going to let Ambassador Kantor continue to pursue this one in the way that we have agreed upon. I think that he is proceeding in good faith.

### ***New Political Dialog***

**Q.** Mr. President, when a politician starts talking about the irrelevancy or inadequacy of terms such as liberal and conservative, and even adds, as you did in Dallas, Democrat and Republican, usually they're in trouble or see a bad patch coming down the road. Is that the case with you, or why did you bring the issue up again?

**The President.** First of all, that's what I said when I ran for President; that's what I said when I was head of the Democratic Leadership Council; that's what I said when I was the Governor of my State: That we were going into a new era, when a lot of the old divisions and old labels didn't mean the same thing. We have to redefine them. And I have sought to redefine them from the be-

ginning of my campaign for President and indeed before. And I still find it very frustrating from time to time when I am not successful in redefining it, because I think the American people—to the American people, a lot of what they hear and see and read up here, is a real turn-off because it seems that these categories of debate are extreme on both sides and don't fit with their experience and their concerns for the future.

**Q.** Do you think you failed in that regard?

**The President.** No, I think that—I think that we're in a process in which a new political dialog and a new understanding is struggling to be born. I think that in the last election, if you say, you choose more government or less, less wins; you choose more taxes or less, less wins. But everybody instinctively knows that's not the real choice. The real choice is, does it make sense to cut Head Start? Does it make sense to cut immunizations for kids or college loans? No. Does it make sense to cut bureaucracy? Yes. So the real question is, how do we have a language that reflects what people know is the right thing for the country to do. And I'm doing my best to help the country develop the language and the debate.

### **Family Values and Moral Virtue**

**Q.** Mr. President, I'd like to ask you a philosophical question tonight. A number of the Nation's social critics have been saying lately that America is what they call a morally bewildered society. And they cite as evidence the fact that much of the Nation's political discourse and its public debate centers on the subject of family values. These critics say that family values is really a fig leaf or a euphemism to cover up the Nation's moral relativism.

I'd like to know if you think that the distinction between moral virtue—in the ancient Roman or old Victorian sense—the distinction between that and family values is a valid and legitimate one. And if you do, do you think that you and the other candidates in the '96 Presidential contest should debate the Nation's social compact on the basis of instilling moral virtue rather than family values?

**The President.** Well, I think family values require moral virtue. I mean, family values

mean to me that people make common sacrifices to stay together, to work together, to put primacy on the family unit and the rearing of children and to put their children first. I think that that has been at the bedrock of our success as a country and as a bedrock of other successful civilizations. And I think when people cease to put the interest of their children and the future ahead of their interest of themselves in the short run, we get in trouble.

I believe that if you look at the successes in this country, both the individual successes and the places where there are broad success, there are strong support for families, and families are generally successful. I also believe that America worries so much about moral relativism because we are the least relativistic of all the big countries. We are the most religious. We are the most likely to believe not only in God but in absolute rules of right and wrong here on Earth. And I think the fact that we worry about it shows that we have problems in our country which are inconsistent with our beliefs, and we know that we can't solve our problems purely by some common social action. We also require personal changes to solve those problems. I think that is a broadly held belief in the United States, and I certainly believe that. And my experience is consistent with that.

Yes, Mara [Mara Liasson, National Public Radio].

### **Affirmative Action**

**Q.** Mr. President, in California recently you urged Democrats who are grappling with the issue of affirmative action to be sensitive to the feelings of angry white males. And if you were addressing a group of so-called angry white males tonight, how would you convince them that Federal programs that have goals of giving a certain percentage of contracts or jobs to minorities are good and fair for everyone, including white males?

**The President.** Well, first of all I don't want to prejudge the review of all the Federal programs that I'm going through. So I wouldn't—I don't want to answer that question. But I would say first of all to them—I will answer the question when I complete the review, which won't be long. But I don't

want to do—I would say, though, the earnings of male workers, including white male workers, have been declining when measured against inflation, for years now. So people are working harder—these male workers are working harder for lower wages, unless they have good educations or are in a section of the economy that's growing very rapidly. I would say to them, your problem is the problem of what's happening to wages and rising inequality in the United States. And it was caused primarily by foreign competition, technology, the weakening of organized labor, the collapse of the minimum wage, and according to the study which was in the paper today, the tax and budgetary policies of the last 12 years before I became President which aggravated inequality.

And what I am trying to do is, number one, give you equality again with better jobs, more jobs, a higher minimum wage, a tax cut for workers with modest incomes and children in the home, about \$1,000 a year for incomes under \$25,000 this year; and that on affirmative action, your principle should be, we're all better off if everybody's got an even chance, if there's no discrimination, if people have the opportunity to live up to the fullest of their ability, but the Government should never give someone who is unqualified anything over someone who is qualified.

#### **Robert G. Torricelli Investigation**

**Q.** Congressman Torricelli of New Jersey is embroiled in a controversy over the revelations he made about the CIA and its apparent involvement in murders in Guatemala. You have indicated your concerns about the CIA's conduct. I want to know what your thoughts are about Congressman Torricelli's conduct? Should he have revealed that information or not? And if he should not have, should he be disciplined?

**The President.** Well, what should happen to him depends on, number one, what the facts are, and, number two, what the House decides to do with it. And they have to do their investigation, and they have to make their determination.

What I do believe is that the United States owes the American people a thorough investigation of the allegations of what went on. And it may take a little time because these

are things which occurred by and large before I became President. But I've asked the Intelligence Oversight Board to look into it. I expect them to do a thorough and deep job, and I expect to have the truth, and I expect us to take the appropriate action. That is exactly what we will do. But it is not for me to judge Congressman Torricelli.

**Q.** [*Inaudible*]*—at all about the information coming out as the person ultimately responsible as the guardian of American intelligence?*

**The President.** I am concerned about the information coming out, but in the end, I think that it is unlikely given the facts of this case that certain information would not have come out.

Yes, Peter [Peter Maer, Westwood One Radio], and then Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News].

#### **Middle East Peace Process**

**Q.** Mr. President, outward appearances would indicate that one of your key foreign policy goals, a comprehensive Middle East peace, is deadlocked, especially on the Israeli-Syrian track. Is there a stalemate? And especially in light of the recent terrorist incidents, and word today that Syria wants to get land to the Sea of Galilee?

**The President.** Well, I won't comment on the details of the negotiations between them because that would only complicate matters. It is difficult. We knew it would be difficult. I do believe that both Prime Minister Rabin and President Asad want to make a comprehensive peace. I do believe that both of them understand they don't have unlimited time. I do believe that the United States still has the trust of both parties in working to help them reach an agreement. And as concerned as I am about it, I am more hopeful today than I was, let's say, 45 days ago. We just have to keep at it.

**Q.** Sir, I want to ask you—

**Q.** [*Inaudible*]*—stalemate incorrect then?*

**The President.** I think the correct perception is that we're not on the edge of a breakthrough. But that does not mean that there is no ongoing work on this and that does not mean that the parties have basically hardened their hearts and minds and decided that

there will not be a resolution of this in the fairly near-term.

### **Central Intelligence Agency**

**Q.** Sir, there's something funny going on out at the CIA. I wonder just how many times you have looked into it and had a really good, honest briefing on it. But today we have found out that they are taking their classified documents and sending them by mail to retired former CIA people. This gets them out of the records, out of the storehouse out there, and gets them into a private home where nobody could ever find them if they conducted a congressional investigation of CIA reports. Some of these are classified and some are not, but they have the names on them of the officers who worked on them, and they have mailed them back to the officers who worked on them. Why they are doing this, I don't know, but it sounds like they are trying to keep us from getting a chance at the records.

**The President.** Let me make two comments quickly on that. First of all, I have made it clear to the Intelligence Oversight Board that I want a thorough investigation of all these matters—and clear to the CIA leadership there, including the Acting Director, that I want the records, the relevant records, secured and accounted for.

Secondly, I think this reinforces the need for the United States Senate to hold quick confirmation hearings and have a prompt vote on John Deutch to be the new Director. Let's get him out there so we can get on with the business of doing what we need to do.

### **1996 Election**

**Q.** Sir, I know you've said that you'd like to put politics aside for a certain period, but last week you opened—you formally opened your campaign office for reelection in town here. And I was wondering if you might take a minute to say—to fill in the blank, and say, I believe I should be reelected President in 1996 because—and take it from there.

**The President.** I believe I should be reelected—[laughter]—because I have done what I said I would do, because we have got good results, and because the policies that I now advocate, most importantly, will ad-

dress the outstanding problems of the country.

If you look at this problem of inequality. If you look at the economic problems, what is the response? The response is to invest more in education, to raise the minimum wage, to expand trade in high wage products in the United States to generate more jobs.

If you look at the problems of the social fabric that you asked about, what is the answer? The answer is to tell people the truth about things they have to do to make things better, to assume more responsibility, to do the right things but to have policies, from welfare reform to supporting children, to doing things to make adoptions easier and more preferable to other alternatives, which we're working on now, that build up families and build up communities.

We are moving the country in the right direction. We are doing what we said we would do. We are getting results. This country is in a stronger position today than it was 2 years ago.

### **Taxes**

**Q.** Mr. President, the idea of a flat tax is more and more popular with a lot of people. In your mind, what would be wrong with a flat tax? And more fundamentally, for lack of a more elegant term, what's wrong with blowing up the present tax structure as it is?

**The President.** Well, I tell you what, after I just went over my tax returns last week, that has more appeal than it did a week ago. [Laughter] And I think a lot of Americans feel that way.

On the flat tax. What we have to do is to put a pencil to a piece of paper and see how it works. All the studies I have seen say that all the proposals out there now will raise taxes for people with incomes under \$200,000 and lower taxes for people with incomes over \$200,000, like my wife and myself, which would be unfair, and that if they don't do that, they explode the deficit. So the question is, we can't explode the deficit, and we can't be unfair. Can we simplify the tax system without being unfair or increasing the deficit? And if we can do it, then I am open to it. But the studies are not promising on the proposals that are out there now.

### **Strength of the Dollar**

**Q.** Mr. President, both you and your Treasury Secretary have said repeatedly that a strong dollar is in America's interest. But some people don't believe you because they don't see you taking any specific steps to try to make that happen. Can you tell the American people why this would be in America's interest, particularly since a weak dollar encourages export sales, and since the inflation it might cause seems nowhere on the horizon? And if you do want a strong dollar, what can you do or what are you willing to do to achieve it?

**The President.** In the present climate, the ability of governments to affect the strength of their currency or in the case of Japan, as you see, that would like a weaker yen, the ability of governments that have strong currencies to get a weaker one, in the short run, may be limited, as we have seen in countless examples over the last several years. So what you have to do is work over the long run.

The United States does want a strong dollar. We believe in the importance of fundamentals in our economy. We believe in getting the deficit down, getting jobs up and pursuing a responsible course. I have done that for 2 years. I will continue to do that.

Yes, Judy [Judy Keen, USA Today].

**Q.** Can you tell us sir—to follow up—what a strong dollar would do for the economy?

**The President.** Well, the point is that a weak dollar, eventually, over a long period of time, will weaken the economy, either by bringing inflation into it or by upsetting the whole complex international fabric of business relationships that are carried on in dollars. So we do have an interest over the long run in a strong currency. But we have to look at it—but for Government—Government actions need to be directed toward long-term fundamentals, sound economic policies, sound growth policies, sound investment policies.

Yes, Judy [Judy Keen, USA Today].

### **President's Leadership Role**

**Q.** President Clinton, Republicans have dominated political debate in this country since they took over Congress in January. And even tonight, two of the major television networks declined to broadcast this event

live. Do you worry about making sure that your voice is heard in the coming months?

**The President.** No. I would remind you, I had at least one press conference during the previous 2 years when I had it at night, but only one of the networks covered it, as I remember. But the important thing is for me to do these press conferences on a regular basis, and every 3 or 4 months, to do it at night so that anyone who wants to cover it, can.

The Constitution gives me relevance. The power of our ideas gives me relevance. The record we have built up over the last 2 years and the things we're trying to do to implement it, give it relevance. The President is relevant here, especially an activist President. And the fact that I am willing to work with the Republicans. The question is, are they willing to work with me? I have shown good faith. That's how we got two of those bills in the contract that I supported in 1992 signed into law. That's how we got a strong showing among Senate Democrats for the line-item veto. I have shown good faith. The question is, what happens now?

### **Surgeon General Nomination**

**Q.** Mr. President, as a follow-up to Helen's question about the Foster nomination, it is now at the whim not only of Majority Leader Dole but three other Presidential candidates who are in the Senate, and then when the going gets tough, there are some Democrats who may very well run for cover. I'm wondering if you can tell us if Dr. Foster knows himself the difficult period that lies ahead if, as you say, you are going to the mat with this and whether—and the possible or probable outcome.

**The President.** I think he knows that it will be difficult. I think that he has been warned repeatedly, not by me but by reading it in the press or seeing it, that Presidential politics seems to have found its way into his nomination. But you know, sometimes the American system works the way it's supposed to, and sometimes the right thing has been done.

I will say again: He is a distinguished physician. He is a good man. He has a good record. He should be confirmed.

### ***Enola Gay Exhibit***

**Q.** Can you explain why you supported the veterans' effort to end the Smithsonian's exhibit of the Enola Gay, which was seen by many as an effort to educate the public on the pros and cons of the nuclear bomb? Is this subject taboo in the United States?

**The President.** No, I don't think the subject is taboo. I don't think the subject is taboo. But my simple position is, as I said to the newspaper editors, that painful though it is, even after 50 years, that President Truman did the right thing. And I do not believe that on the celebration of the end of the war and the service and the sacrifice of our people, that that is the appropriate time to be asking about or launching a major reexamination of that issue. Anyone who wants to write a book about it, express a contrary opinion, is perfectly free to do so, but I don't think that the policy of my administration or the United States should be to say that's the way to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. I disagree with that. I don't think it's right.

Yes, Jill [Jill Dougherty, CNN].

### ***Russia***

**Q.** Mr. President, in terms of your upcoming trip to Russia, in spite of what your administration has said numerous times to Russia about NATO expansion, the Russian—the Yeltsin government either does not understand or will not understand that that is not a threat to them. And in fact, some people in Russia are now talking about rearming in a nuclear fashion to allay some—any type of attack from the West.

When you meet with Boris Yeltsin, what will you say to him to convince him that it is not a threat?

**The President.** I will say what I have always said, that NATO is not an offensive alliance; it is a defensive alliance, a security alliance; that NATO has worked with Russia and Bosnia; that NATO has invited Russia to be a part of the Partnership For Peace and has not excluded anybody from potential NATO membership; that Russia, in terms of its security interest, has nothing to fear from a NATO which expands in a gradual, open, straightforward way and, at the same time, is deepening its relationship with Russia.

**Q.** Why does Mr. Yeltsin not understand that? He's said it numerous times.

**The President.** That is something you'll have to ask them. I understand they're—you know, they have the same sort of domestic political pressures that every country has and misunderstandings, but I think the United States has shown its good faith in our dealings with Russia.

The United States did not move aggressively to help Russia overcome the burden of decades of Communist economics and other problems that were left when the cold war was over and the Soviet Union collapsed to turn around and make Russia an enemy. That is not why we did all that work to help rebuild their economy, to support their movement to democracy, to support their integration and their work with the G-7 and all these other countries. We have shown our good faith. But we cannot and we should not give any nation a veto over the expansion of NATO when it is otherwise appropriate to do so.

### ***International Financial Reform***

**Q.** Mr. President, concerning—to follow up on the question about the dollar, there is growing concern that there is instability within the international financial system as a whole. There are some proposals, like I know the Japanese Finance Minister put out a proposal regarding international financial reform, reform of the international system. How do you view this situation? And what would be your primary concerns in such a reform of the international financial system?

**The President.** First, let me say that this is an issue which needs to be addressed, but it needs to be addressed in a very thoughtful way so as not to further aggravate whatever conditions exist there. It is obvious that the integration of the global financial markets have—that that has many advantages—that you can get money to places in a hurry, that places that have been underdeveloped can develop more quickly, that you can develop the sophisticated trading relationships more rapidly, and that this is all a positive.

It is also obvious that as with almost every other element in the modern society that we live in, every force of integration carries within it the seeds of potential disintegration, of



rapid unraveling. So last year that's why I asked the heads of the other G-7 countries, the other major economies, to devote a discussion this summer when we meet in Canada to this subject. We have been working on it; the Japanese have been working on it; the Canadians have been working on it; the Europeans have been working on it. And we will have a long talk about it this summer. We will do our very best to come up with sensible statements about where we go from here.

George [George Condon, Copley News Service].

### **Japan-U.S. Relations**

**Q.** Mr. President, to follow up on the answer you gave a moment ago, when you spoke last week about President Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb, Americans overwhelmingly thought you were right not to apologize. The Japanese overwhelmingly thought you were insensitive. Were you surprised that 50 years after the event there is still that wide divergence of opinion? And do you see any chance of that gulf ever being bridged?

**The President.** The way to bridge the gulf is to talk about the friendship that we have now, the respect and regard that we have now, the common interests that we have now. I did not say that to hurt anyone's feelings or to be insensitive to anyone in Japan. I know what a terrible, terrible loss of life there was, how many scarred families there were, how difficult it was. It was hard in World War II. Twenty million Russians lost their lives in World War II. No one can fail to be sensitive to the loss.

Do I wish none of it had happened? Of course, I do. But that does not mean that President Truman, in the moment of decision, made the wrong decision or that the United States can now apologize for a decision that we did not believe then and I do not believe now was the wrong one. That has nothing to do with my feelings for the Japanese people, my profound sorrow at the suffering and the agony that they went through.

But we have recovered from that. We have gone on from that. We have one of the world's most important bilateral relationships. The thing we need to do now is to

join together and look to the future. We're up to our ears in challenges today. Let's get on with dealing with them in mutual respect and support. And that's the way to get this behind us.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 93d news conference began at 9:01 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel; and President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria.

### **Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Tansu Ciller of Turkey**

*April 19, 1995*

**The President.** Let me say that, as always, it's good to have Prime Minister Ciller back in Washington. I welcome her here. Turkey is a valued, important ally of the United States, and our relationship will become even more important in the years ahead.

We're about to go into a meeting where we will discuss a number of issues, her programs for democratization and for economic reform, the Turkish operation in Northern Iraq, which obviously, the United States hopes will be limited in duration and scope. We'll talk about Cyprus and a number of other issues—whatever the Prime Minister wants to discuss. But I'm looking forward to the conversation, and I'm glad she's here.

### **Turkish Operations in Iraq**

**Q.** Do you expect her to set a date for the evacuation from Iraq? And is Iraq supporting her drive against the Kurds?

**The President.** Why don't you ask her those questions?

**Q.** I will. Do you plan to set a date for withdrawal from Iraq? And is Iraq supporting this drive against the Kurds? Are there good Kurds and bad Kurds?

**Prime Minister Ciller.** As you know, we were together in the fight against Iraq in the Gulf crisis, and then we were together again with the United States in Provide Comfort to protect the Kurdish people in Northern Iraq against Saddam's regime. And it so happened, however, that Turkey was probably